

Lauren Wisser

Technology in the Classroom

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Final Project

The 21st century classroom is a whole new type of classroom, which is still a rare site in schools today. 21st century classrooms are more student centered and less teacher centered. Students are given the opportunity to be actively involved in what they are learning, and technology is used to enhance and guide students learning. The teacher in this type of classroom is no longer the one who stands in front of the classroom and “gives” the facts to the students. Instead the teacher acts more like a coach and guides the students in their learning. The teacher also provides real world situations that relate what the students are learning to make learning more personal for the students. This is happening because in today’s world it is no longer necessary for students to memorize facts. With technology the answer to almost any question can be answered in just a few key pushes. Therefore, we need to change the way we teach.

Since so much information is easily accessible in today’s world we need to change the way our classrooms run in order to help prepare students for the real world. Today students need to be able to think critically about things and be able to analyze and interrupt information. Today students must also learn to be lifelong learners because our world is continuously changing and new items are constantly becoming available.

With this new type of classroom, there is also a call for a new way of assessing what students are learning. Since teaching is moving away from just teaching the facts, having students replicate those facts back to the teacher on a test no longer works as a way of assessing what students really know (if it ever really did). In the 21st century classroom

assessing students should be more about providing them with feedback and letting them complete assignments that really show what they learned by applying their knowledge. They should be able to know what they did well and what they need to work on so they can improve their work for the next time, not just have answers marked wrong and then forgotten about because we do not learn anything from that. The 21st century classroom is about continually learning, learning inside of school, outside of school, and into the future.

To teach students in the 21st century classroom technology that enhances student's learning is key. Many students come to school already knowing how to use many different types of technology because they are surrounded by it outside of school. Since they have grown up with technology as part of their everyday lives they can easily play around with new technologies and figure out how to use new programs easily. Therefore, in school we need to use technology to enhance our lessons and not make how to use the technology the lesson because they already know how to do that. We need to make them aware of all the tools that are out there that they can use by using them in our lessons. This will help prepare them for the real world as well as relate what they are learning to their everyday lives.

The technology tools that we use in our classroom should be used to make learning more meaningful to the students. One tool that makes learning both more meaningful and more interactive is the interactive white board/smart board. If this tool is used properly learning is made more interactive for the students. There are endless possibilities to using with these boards in the classroom. There are so many different tools that can be found online that can be used with the smart boards, such as, games and other interactive activities for almost any subject. Then once you as the teacher gets more comfortable with using the board you can start to design your own games and lessons using the board, as we saw from our presenter that came in to teach as about the boards.

A huge part of today's world is being able to communicate and share your work with others outside of being face to face with one another. Therefore, students need to become more familiar with things like google docs, blogs, wikispaces, digi, podcasting, skype, and tools that are used to make and create videos. All of these tools can be worked into lessons, and be used to help students to reflect and think critically as well. Blogs can be used in the classroom and serve almost the same purpose as journal writing. They can be used to reflect on what they are learning, and to ask and answer questions. Students can then communicate with their peers and with their teacher through leaving comments on each other's pages. Google docs can be used so that more than one person can add to the same document, and it can be shared. What is also great about google docs is that all the information is stored in the online "cloud" so it can be accessed from any computer at any time. Wikispaces also allow students to share information like links to sites and much more with each other. Skype can be used to communicate with other classrooms around the world, and makes it so classrooms can collaborate on projects, which couldn't otherwise happen without this technology.

All the technology that is available to students and us as teachers is changing the way we think, learn, communicate and teach. If we want our students to be successful and engaged in what they are learning we have to accept that the world around us is changing, and teach our students through the thing they know best technology.